

Top Illinois Panthers murdered

By Clark Kissinger
Special to the Guardian

Chicago

A special assassination squad of the Chicago police department, in a pre-dawn "search and destroy" mission, last week murdered Fred Hampton, chairman of the Illinois Black Panther party and Mark Clark, a Panther leader from Peoria, Ill. Four other Panthers were wounded.

The murders, the most obviously staged of the scores of attacks on the Black Panther party across the country over the past two years, brought the total of party members and leaders assassinated by the government to 28.

The killings took place early Thursday morning, Dec. 4, in Hampton's apartment on Chicago's West Side, one block from the Panther party office. Hampton, 21, died of two gun shots, one in the left side of his head and one in the back of his neck as he lay in bed sleeping in the rear of his apartment. The mattress on which Hampton was lying was soaked with blood and riddled with bullet holes. Clark, 22, was found dead behind a door. The others wounded in the police attack were Brenda Harris, 18, gunshot wounded in the hand and right leg; Verlina Brewer, 17, wounded in the buttocks and right knee; Blair Anderson, 18, wounded in the groin and right leg and Ronald "Doc" Satchel, Illinois minister of health for the party, 19, wounded in the right leg, right flank and right hand. All four were taken to Cook County Hospital where they are reported in fair condition.

Three other Panthers escaped injury and were arrested, charged with attempted murder and aggravated battery. They are Deborah Johnson, Lewis Truelock and Harold Bell, a student at Rock Valley College. Deborah Johnson, who is eight months pregnant, was released on \$25,000 bail the next evening. Truelock and Bell have had bail of \$100,000 and \$35,000 respectively.

According to the police version, 14 Chicago police assigned to the State Attorney's office went to Hampton's apartment at 4:45 in the morning to serve a search warrant for illegal weapons. Sgt. Daniel Groth, who led the raid, says police knocked on the door, announced they were officers with a search warrant and repeatedly demanded entry. When he finally pushed the door open, says Groth, he was fired upon by a girl with a shotgun. Police claim a general gun battle ensued during which officers entering the apartment from the front and back were fired on by six or seven Panthers with both shotguns and pistols. Police claim they called for a "cease fire" several times, but that the Panthers insisted on "shooting it out."

The Black Panther party through its Illinois defense minister, Bobby Rush, immediately charged Hampton was killed in bed while he slept by police who had slipped in the rear of the apartment and that no gun battle ever took place, but that police simply sprayed the apartment with gun fire in an attempt to kill everyone there. The apartment was immediately opened to the press by the Panthers as soon as the police left the scene.

This reporter, along with many others, examined the scene shortly after the killings. The physical evidence completely con-

tradicts the police story.

There is only one bullet hole in the front door leading into the living room, a hole made from the outside. Behind it is a pool of blood, the spot where Mark Clark is presumed to have died. The rear wall of the living room has a minimum of 40 bullet holes in it in a downward sloping pattern as though fired by a machine gun. The shots which made the holes were fired from the living room and the paths of the bullets can be traced back through the plasterboard walls of the two bedrooms. The two rooms have at least five patterns of holes made by shotgun fire into them from the kitchen and the hallway. The only two broken windows in the apartment are in Hampton's bedroom and in the kitchen leading onto the back porch. The kitchen window is broken along a perfectly straight horizontal line where it was scored by a glass cutter.

Nowhere in the apartment is there any evidence that any shots were fired out of the bedroom or out of the front door. It is absolutely impossible that there could have been a gun battle such as claimed by the police. All bullet holes lead into the bedroom from the front and back entries. Hampton's bed is covered with blood stains, with blood running over the side of the

bed onto the floor. The police admit that his body was found on the bed.

The police admit to two "casualties." One police officer was treated for a slight wound in the hand. He had entered from the rear and may have been shot accidentally by officers firing from the front of the apartment. Another officer cut his hand on broken glass, presumably while climbing through the back window. Both were treated and released.

The police version of the incident has come under attack from officers of the Afro-American Patrolman's League, an organization of black policemen in Chicago and several local political figures. Patrolman Renault Robinson, president of the Patrolman's League, said his organization did not believe the official story "by the physical evidence. The powder burns from the bullets were on the outside of the door, meaning the shots were fired in. By the front door was a large pool of blood, meaning whoever opened the door to let them in got his then and there."

Black Alderman A.A. Rayner called the incident an "assassination" and charged that it was part of a "systematic extermination" of Black Panther party leadership.

Meanwhile police continued their rampage against the Panther leadership with an early-morning raid the following day on the apartment of defense minister Rush, who had been on television all day exposing the spurious official account of the murders.



Chairman Fred

Again staging their attack under the pretext of a search for weapons, police smashed down the doors of Rush's South apartment at 5:30 a.m. on Friday, Dec. 5. Rush escaped certain death by not being home at the time of the raid. Survivors of the attack on Hampton's apartment said police told them "Rush is next." Police announced the seizure of an unregistered gun and a warrant was issued for Rush's arrest. He surrendered Saturday morning to the president of the Afro-American man's league and was immediately freed on bond.

Hampton's assassination came as the climax of a series of recent police attacks in Chicago in which the Panthers have successfully defended themselves. Three days before the murder of Hampton, a Panther apartment was invaded. Shots were exchanged and one was hit. Three Panthers, including Illinois laborer Lynn French, were arrested and beaten. On Nov. 13, a South Side shoot-out resulted in two cops dead and one Panther killed. The Illinois Panther office has been attacked three times, on July 31 and Oct. 4.

Response throughout Chicago to Hampton's assassination has been immediate, disciplined and overwhelming. Rallies and demonstrations were held at numerous high schools and colleges. At several city high schools calling special (official) memorial services in a desperate attempt to head off more militant actions. White as well as black students walked out of Kenwood High School in protest.

On Friday morning, a special memorial mass was held at Holy Angels Catholic Church at the request of the students of the black parochial Holy Angels school. Militant black priest George Clements decorated the altar with a huge black fishbowl portrait of chairman Hampton. More than 1500 people at the service. Young black students from the school delivered eulogies. When the service closed, the priest asked the assemblage to raise clenched fists, which they did together, shouting, "right on."

At noon on Friday several hundred people stood in a vigil in the Civic Center Plaza in downtown Chicago. They wore signs with the names of 20 Panthers who have been killed by the police.

A special memorial service at the Malcolm X College heard school president Dr. Charles Hurst say that the murder of Hampton was "an atrocity that ought to shock every decent-loving person in this country." Hurst announced that the main conference room in the school was being renamed in honor of Hampton who was, at one time, a student at the college.

At the Chicago campus of the University of Illinois over 100 students demonstrated outside the office of the police in the city campus. In North suburban Evanston 10 students from Northwestern University and Kendall College were arrested while leading a march protesting the assassinations.

Throughout the city individuals stood on street corners

outside film showings collecting funds for the Panthers, were arrested for soliciting funds in violation of city ordinance. High school demonstrations also took place in downstate Illinois and Lafayette, Indiana.

Representatives of 110 black community groups met
(continued on page 2)

GUARDIAN / DECEMBER 13, 1968

(continued from page 3)

Friday evening rally to lay plans for a shutdown of all schools and businesses in the black community while Hampton's body lies "in blackness." The funeral was scheduled to be held Monday, Dec. 8, at the First Baptist Church in Melrose Park.

On Saturday afternoon the Panthers held their own memorial rally, which became a rally of armed defense. The crowd of 3000 spilled out of the Church of the Epiphany onto surrounding streets. Dozens of representatives of black and Latin organizations spoke. The highlights were addresses by William Hampton, chairman Fred's older brother; Deborah Johnson, the only survivor of the assassination who has been freed on bond; Dr. Hurst and at the end, a surprise appearance by Bobby Rush who had surrendered to police only a few hours before. Dr. Hurst promised to turn the Malcolm X campus into a recruiting ground for a black liberation army. Rush brought the crowd to its feet stomping and cheering as he declared the Panther's intentions to carry on their program.

Hampton, chairman of the Illinois Black Panther Party for the last year and a half when he and a few friends founded the organization, was unquestionably the most respected revolutionary leader in Chicago. Intensely political and universally respected for his tirelessness in the cause of liberation, Hampton's life had been devoted to the creation of a mass revolutionary force in the black community. He had a reputation for being undogmatic, patient in his analysis of concrete situations, self-critical and completely fearless. He was an eloquent public speaker and always said that he was "high on the people." He especially involved himself in developing party ties to the people and to coalition organizations. His work included building links with black street gangs, participation in the Rainbow Coalition with the Young Lords (Puerto Ricans) and Young Patriots (poor whites). He spoke frequently to both black student unions and white student groups, visited black communities up and down the state and conducted political education classes within the Party.

Chairman Hampton grew up in Maywood, a western suburb of Chicago. An "A" student at Priviso East high school, he was also on the football, basketball and baseball teams and in the Junior Achievement program. At that time his ambition was to become a lawyer.

In 1966 he was elected president of the West Suburban Youth Council of the NAACP and immediately launched a campaign to have a swimming pool built in the black community in Maywood. In 1967 he was arrested for mob action in a swimming pool demonstration and later that year he was arrested again for "inciting to riot."

After founding the Black Panther party in Illinois in 1968, Hampton was arrested in connection with an incident in which a large group of black youth "liberated" a Good Humor ice cream truck and distributed ice cream to children. He was found guilty of stealing \$71 worth of ice cream and given a 2-5 year sentence in the state penitentiary. He served several months before being freed on appeal bond. Since that time, Chicago police have never missed an opportunity to hang more charges on him and at the time of his death he had at least a dozen cases against him pending in the courts.

With an acute sense of realism, Hampton lived every moment as though it were his last. It was as though he wanted to get as much political work done as possible before the end which he knew was inevitable.

In the last speech he made before his assassination, Chairman Hampton said: "This system is out to kill us and we know it. Some say we are not ready to take on this monster. We say that we do not want to, but that is not the question any longer. The monster has taken us on and we have to deal with reality."